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NO. 46
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TALES FROM THE CRYPT



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FEATURING ...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEY WELCOME, YOU DEAR LITTLE MORBID MONSTERS, TO MY NEW TERROR-TITLES! E.C.'S BRUISING THREE-SOME IS NOW A REVOLTING FOURSOME, AS "THE CRYPT OF TERROR" JOINS WITH "THE VAULT OF HORROR," "THE HAUNT OF FEAR," AND "TALES FROM THE CRYPT" TO BRING YOU HEAVING HELPLIFTS OF HORROR IN THE OFT-IMITATED E.C. TRADITION. I TRUST YOU'LL BE AWFULLY SICKENED BY THIS LATEST COLLECTION OF CADAVEROUS GAYOT TITLES. AS OF NOW, ALL IS AT PEACE AT THE E.C. OFFICE, BUT I EXPECT TROUBLE WITH THE VAULT-KEEPER AND THE OLD BITCH REALIZE THAT I NOW HAVE TWO MUCH-BEARS TO THEIR OWN! OH, WELL, THERE'S NO USE SLAUGHTERING YOUR CHICKENS BEFORE YOU COME TO THE BURNED BRIDGES. NO, COME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR... AND YOUR MOST IN HOWLS AND HEAVES. YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER WILL LAUNCH MY NEW HAUNTEATING NEWSPRINT-HARDCOPY WITH THE BLOOD-CURLING, SPINE-TINGLING YELP-YARN I CALL "

UPON REFLECTION



CHESTER WATNE TRUDGED TREMULOUSLY ALONG THE MACADAM ROAD LEADING FROM PLAINSVILLE. HIS HEMP-POWERED RIFLE WAS READY, HIS NERVOUS FINGER ON THE TRIGGER. ABOVE, A FULL-POUNDED MOON THREW A PALE LIGHT ON THE COUNTRYSIDE, SILHOUETTING EACH SHADY BUSH INTO AN OMNIBUS CROUCHING FIGURE. AROUND HIM, EACH FAINT WHISPER OF WIND WHIMMED, "NO MACH! NO SAGOT!"



THINKING OF MAMIE MADE CHESTER MAD AND DROVE HIM ON. HE WAS ROUNDING A TURN WHEN HE SAW IT NOT FORTY FEET AHEAD. HE STOPPED ABRUPTLY AND CALLED OUT TO THE BLACK-CLOAKED HULK IN THE SHALLOW ROAD-SIDE DITCH...



THE STARTLED CREATURE TURNED FROM ITS HUMAN PREY. CLAMMY SWEAT BROKE OUT ON CHESTER WHEN HE SAW THE HAIRY FACE, THE BLOOD DRIPPING FROM ITS LIPS AND CHIN...

GODDESS OH, LORD...



THE WEREWOLF BARED ITS FANGS AT THE HUNTER AND SNARLED. CHESTER DROPPED TO ONE KNEE, THREW THE RIFLE TO HIS SHOULDER AND SQUEEZED THE TRIGGER. A HOLLOW-NOSED .33 SHRIEKED ACROSS THE ROAD AFTER THE HOW-FLICKIN' BEAST.



HE WAS NUMB WITH HORROR, HALF-BLIND WITH RAGE AS HE ROLLED AWAY AT THE DISAPPEARING MONSTER TILL THE MAGAZINE WAS EMPTY AND THE HAMMER CLUNKED DEAD ON THE EMPTY RIFLE CHAMBER.

MISSSED HIM, SON... MAMIE! I SOO... MISSSED...



LOATH TO LOOK UPON THE BURY REMAINS THAT LAY IN THE DITCH, CHESTER WAS NEVERTHELESS DRAWN TOWARD THEM AS THOUGH BY SOME MAGNET OF MORBIDITY. HE APPROACHED ON TREMBLING LEGS... LOOKED... THEN RECOILED IN HORROR AT THE SIGHT OF BARE BONE AND RAW, HALF-EATEN FLESH...



A GREAT VIOLENT SICKNESS WRENCHED AT CHESTER IN INWARDS... AND HE TURNED, RETCHING, AND RAN THE WHOLE WAY BACK TO PLAINSVILLE...



THE MEN IN WAYLEY'S TAVERN LEAPED TO THEIR FEET AS CHERYL BURST THROUGH THE DOOR. HEADED FOR THE BAR, THEY SAW THE RIFLE AND THE LOOK ON HIS FACE AND THEY KNEW...

WHO... WHO WAS QUICK, FRANK IT THIS TIME, POUR ME SOME-
CNET? THIN' STRAIGHT



IT ALREADY THAT GIVES YOU
NOT SOMEONE MORE RIGHT TO
CLOSE TO ME, PAUL! MY
WIFE MAMIE!

MORE RIGHT TO
TELL THE MAYOR
OFF, CNET. YOU LEAD
THE WAY AND WE'LL
BACK YOU UP!



A FAT LOT OF GOOD THAT'LL
DO, MAYOR! WHAT ABOUT
THE PROTECTION YOU
PROMISED US?

WHAT CAN I DO, MR.
WAYNE? FOR ONE
THING, THIS FILTHISH
ATTACK TOOK PLACE
OUTSIDE OF TOWN...
BEYOND MY JURISDICTION.



CHESTER TOSSES OFF A DOUBLE BOURBON... AND WHILE IT WAS STILL BURNING DOWN, HE PARTED OUT THE TERRIBLE DETAILS OF HIS HARROWING EXPERIENCE...

GOD, MAN! FARMER HAS A
PLACE THREE MILES
IT WASN'T OUT... BEEN HIM IN
ALL GOT FAMILIES!

QUIET. HE'S GONNA
BE QUIET A LONG,
LONGTIME NOW...
LIKE MY MAMIE!



FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER, MAYOR
EDWARD HANSON WAS AWAKENED BY
SHOUTS OF HIS NAME. HE LEANED
UNSTEADILY FROM THE BEDROOM WIN-
DOW OF HIS COLONIAL HOME AND
LOOKED DOWN AT THE ANGRY CROWD
BELLOW...

PLEASE, GENTLEMEN! THEN COME
MY WIFE IS ASLEEP! ON DOWN,
MAYOR!



AT FIRST THE MEN EXCHANGED
SULKY BLANCES OF RELIEF, BUT
AFTER A FEW MOMENTS OF BROODING
SILENCE, PAUL MYERS CLIMBED ONTO
A TABLE AND SHOUTED...

THAT MAKES FIVE VICTIMS IN AS
MANY MONTHS... AND WHY? AIN'T
WE PAYIN' FOR PROTECTION IN
THIS ROTTEN TOWN? ALL WE GET
FROM MAYOR HANSON IS PROMISES
DO WE WAIT TILL THAT WEREWOLF
GRABB SOMEONE CLOSE TO US
BEFORE WE MAKE HANSON DO
SOMETHIN'!!



SOON, HIS PORTLY PAJAMA-CLAD
FIGURE WRAPPED IN A SILKEN ROBE,
THE DISMISSED MAYOR OF PLAIN-
VILLE STOOD BEFORE HIS TOADS-
PEOPLE, LISTENING TO THE FRIGHT-
FUL WORDS...

TERRIBLE! TERRIBLE!
I'LL SEND OFFICIAL CON-
DOLENCE TO HIS WIDOW
ON THE MORNING...



MY WIFE'S BODY WAS
HANGING RIGHT HERE
ON THE STREETS OF PLAINVILLE!

WE WANT
MORE THAN
WORDS, MAYOR!

WHAT'RE
YOU GOIN'
TO DO
ABOUT IT,
HANSON?



MAYOR HANSON TRIED TO PACIFY THE MOULDED MOON.

PLEASE, GENTLE MEN! NOW, MR. WAYNE, YOU SAY YOU FIRED SEVERAL SILVER BULLETS AT THIS WEREWOLF. THEY WERE SILVER BULLETS, OF COURSE!

SILVER? I DON'T GET YOU, MAYOR. I USED A DE-LOUN-NODDED .33'S. LEAD. NOT SILVER. THE TIME LIKE DUM-DUMS...



THE MAYOR WENT BACK INTO HIS STATELY HOME. THE CROWD DISPERSED, AND CHESTER WAYNE JOINED PAUL MTERS AND CHICK ROBINS IN A GLOOMY SESSION AT MARLEY'S TAVERN. THERE NEVER WAS A MAN BETTER AT EQUINNIN' OUT OF A HOT SPOT THAN MAYOR HANSON!



SO MONY OF THE PEOPLE OF PLAINVILLE LIVED IN DREAD OF THE COMING FULL MOON... AND THE NIGHT IT ARRIVED, EVERYONE STAYED BEHIND LOCKED DOORS AND SHUTTERED WINDOWS. ONLY CLARA HANSON, THE MAYOR'S WIFE, VENTURED OUT TO VISIT HER AGED AND AHINS MOTHER...

I'VE GOT TO BE HUNGRY ALONG, MAMA. ELWOOD WILL BE WORRYING ABOUT ME! PROMISE YOU'LL TAKE IT EASY.



WHAT ELSE COULD I DO IN THIS WHEELCHAIR, CLARA?



MAYOR HANSON WAS VERY ADAPT AT SHIFTING THE PRESSURE FROM HIMSELF...

WELL, I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN SOMEONE WOULD GO OFF HALF-COOKED! MY DEAH MR. WAYNE... IF YOU'D TAKEN THE TROUBLE TO HEAD UP ON WEREWOLVES, AS I HAVE, YOU'D KNOW THAT ONLY A SILVER BULLET CAN KILL A WEREWOLF!



THE CROWD FELL SILENT WITH EMBARRASSMENT FOR NO MAN WISHED TO ADMIT IGNORANCE TO HIS NEIGHBOR. MAYOR HANSON SMILED PATRONIZINGLY...

I'LL WELCOME ANYONE OF YOU TO MY LIBRARY WHO CARE TO INFORM HIMSELF ON THE HABITS OF THE LYCANTHROPE. MEANWHILE, MY FELLOW CITIZENS, BE CALM AND... GOOD-NIGHT...



CHESTER WAYNE UNIMACED...

YES, WE ARE! WE HAVE TIME... A WHOLE MONTH BEFORE THE NEXT FULL MOON. WE CAN START MELTING DOWN SILVER COINS FOR BULLETS! WE CAN BE READY THE NEXT TIME THAT WEREWOLF SHOWS HIMSELF...



IT WAS JUST THREE SHORT BLOCKS FROM HER MOTHER'S HOUSE TO THE HANSON HOME. CLARA WALKED UNAFRAID, UNTIL SHE SAW THE FULL YELLOW MOON HANGING HIGH ABOVE THE VILLAGE SQUARE...



SULP... THANK HEAVENS IT'S NOT FAR!

CLARA HANSON HURRIED HER STEPS, FINDING SOME LITTLE COMFORT AS THE GROUNDS CLUTTERED OF HER FEET ALONG THE OBSCURED HIGHWAY LEFT TIME WITH THE RAPID BEATING OF HER RACING HEART. SHE'D REACHED THE BRIDGE, ONLY ONE BLOCK FROM HOME, WHEN SHE HEARD THE PERRIFYING SCREAM. SHE SPINNED AROUND... HER BLOOD TURNING TO ICE IN HER VENES...



HER ATTEMPTED SCREAM CAME FORTH AS NO MORE THAN AN ARTHRATIC WHEELING SQUEAL. THE FLESH-STRIPPED BEAST SPRANG... SHAVING ITS GLASSY FACES INTO HER IMPOSING THROAT... RIPPING IT OPEN... MOUNTAINING THE BLOOD OVER ITS HAIRY FACE... INTO ITS RED BOILING EYES...



SHEEPISHLY, THEY PICKED UP THEIR SILVER-BULLET-LOADED CARABINS AND ROLLED FROM THE TAVERN, ACROSS THE SQUARE. THEY GOT NO FURTHER THAN WHERE THE GRIMLY SKELETON OF CLARA HANSON LYED IN A POOL OF CONGEALING BLOOD, HER BLOOD SOAKED CLOTHES STREAM ABOUT...



WHILE JUST ACROSS THE SQUARE, IN MARCY'S TAVERN, CHESTER WAYNE AND PAUL MYERS WERE FORTIFYING THEMSELVES AT THE BAR...



MAYOR HANSON WAS ELKINLY TROUBLED WHEN HE FACED THE TWO WHITE-FACED MEN ACROSS HIS TABLEHOLES...



THE MAYOR RECOGNIZED HIS WIFE'S CLOTHES AT ONCE, WITH MUCH LOUD WAILING AND ANGUISHED SCREAMS, HE FELL ACROSS HER FLESH, STRIPPED BARE...

CLARA - ALL THAT SO... MY CARRYIN' ON CLARA HONT HELP ALONE, PAUL!



AT LAST THE MAYOR AROSE AND HIS TEAR-REDDENED EYES BLAZED.

THAT FILTHY VILE THINGS! I'LL GET EVERY ABLE-BODIED MAN IN THIS TOWN AFTER IT!

THIS TIME IT'S YOUR WIFE, AND WILL THE SHOOTS YOU, ON THE OTHER FOOT!



EVERY MAN WILL BE ARMED! THERE'LL BE SILVER BULLETS FOR ALL! A VIGILANTE COMMITTEE, THAT'S WHAT WE'LL HAVE! WE'LL DIVIDE INTO GROUPS... COME THE NEXT FULL MOON, WE'LL BE WAITING!



WITHIN TWENTY-EIGHT HOURS, EVERY CAPABLE MAN IN PLAINVILLE HAD RECEIVED A RIFLE AND FIVE SILVER BULLETS. EVERYONE HAD PRACTISED WITH MOVING TARGETS. EVERYONE WAS READY. THE AFTERNOON BEFORE THE NIGHT OF THE FULL MOON THE MEN THRONDED BEFORE MAYOR HANSON'S MANSION...

WE'LL START NOW... IN TROOPS OF SIX... IN DAYLIGHT, SO WE CAN ACQUINT OURSELVES WITH EACH AREA!
NOW, REMEMBER...



...STAY CLOSE TOGETHER AND MAKE SURE OF WHAT YOU'RE SHOOTING AT! WHEN YOU SEE SOMETHING MOVE, MAKE CERTAIN IT ISN'T ONE OF YOUR OWN PARTY. PAIR UP! ONE MAN USE A LIGHT WHILE THE OTHER MAN DOES THE SHOOTING! WE DON'T WANT ANY INNOCENT PEOPLE KILLED!



IT WAS TWILIGHT WHEN MAYOR HANSON, WEARING A RED BRADE SHOOTING JACKET AND SCARLET HUNTER'S CAP, CLIMBED FROM HIS CAR AT THE RENDEZVOUS SPOT FOR HIS GROUP. CHESTER WAYNE GRIMMED...

PIPE THE FANCY OUTFIT ON HIS HONOR, PAUL. YOU COULD SEE IT IN A GOAL MINE AT MIDNIGHT.



SHOOTING IN THE DARK IS A DANGEROUS BUSINESS, MR. WAYNE. I'D PREFER BE SAFE THAN SORRY.

WHEN DARKNESS CAME, THE MEN WERE ALERT AND JUNIOR MATT STEVENS, WITH HIS GROUP IN TOWN, SAW A SUSPICIOUS FIGURE, SCREAMED OUT AFTER IT, AND DIED BY SHOOTING...



CUT THAT OUT, MATT! THE MAYOR SAID TO MAKE SURE WHAT YOU'RE SHOOTING AT!

LUCKILY, MATT'S SHOTS WERE
BILLY. THE FIGURE TURNED OUT TO
BE A FAMILAR DRUNK THEY ALL
KNEW WELL....

WELL, WHAT'S
YOU RUN? I
AREN'T THE
WERE
WOLF?
I AIN'T THO
BOUSED I'M
GONA BE A
BITTIN' DUCK
WHEN SHOUDIN'
OPENSH UP ON
ME, MATT SHTEVEN!

MEANWHILE, MAYOR HANSON AND HIS PARTY'D SURROUNDED A STRANGE OLD WOMAN WALKING ALONG A LOVELY DARK ROAD...

LADY, YOU'RE TAKING
A CHANCE BEING
OUT TONIGHT?
BETTER LET US
SEE YOU HOME!

I DON'T
NEED THE
SEED HOME!
I AIN'T
SKEERED!

PAUL MYERS STUPIDLY THREW OLD MAE.
HOLD ON, MAYOR! MAYBE YOU'VE
SAYED SOMETHING
WEREWOLF'S
GOT TO BE A MAN!
I HAVENT THOUGHT
I'VE SEEN THIS OF A FEMALE
QUEER GAME AROUND. WEREWOLF!
I NEVER LIKED
HER LOOKS!

MAYOR HANSON AND PAUL MYERS REVEALED THEIR
THEORY TO THE OTHERS OF THEIR PARTY...

WELL, HOW CAN WE
TELL IF SHE IS THE
WEREWOLF? WE'LL TAKE HER BACK TO MY
PLACE. I HAVE THAT BOOK
IT TELLS HOW TO RECOGNIZE
A WEREWOLF... EVEN IN
HUMAN FORM!

GHEY WAYNE BRANDISHED HIS RIFLE AND SCOPED...

AM, ACTS TO YOUR BOOK,
MAYOR. IN LESS THAN TWENTY
MINUTES, THE MOON WILL BE
FULL. THEN, IF THE OLD LAD
TURNS OUT TO BE WHAT
WE SEE AFTER, WE LET HER
HAVE IT!

...AND IF SHE DOESN'T,
THEN WE'VE WASTED
VALUABLE TIME. PERHAPS
EVEN LET THE REAL
WEREWOLF ESCAPE...

THEY MADE THEIR WAY BACK TO THE MAYOR'S CAR.
THE OLD LAD POUNDED THEM AS THEY TRIED TO PUSH
HER IN. ONE EVEN BIT PAUL'S HAND.

DUCK! THE DIRTY
BITCH! I
AIN'T GOIN' YOU
CAN'T MAKE ME
GO!

PAUL SOLVED THE PROBLEM. HE SWUNG HIS RIFLE-BUTT,
CLIPPING THE OLD WOMAN ACROSS THE SIDE OF HER HEAD.
THIS... THIS IS KIDNAPPING!
AFTER ALL, WE STILL HAVE NO
PROOF! YOU SHOULDN'T
HAVE HIT HER...

ACK, CLIMB OFF MY
BACK, MAYOR! AND
STEP ON IT! SHE'S
OUT COLD!

IT TOOK HIM OVER FIFTEEN MINUTES TO REACH THE MAJOR'S HOUSE IN TOWN. BY THAT TIME, THE OLD MAN HAD REVIVED.

I'LL GET THE BOOK AND COME RIGHT OUT! HOLD HER!

I STILL THINK YOU'RE CRAZY, HANSON! IN LESS THAN THREE MINUTES THE MOON WILL BE FULL... AND THEN WE'LL KNOW FOR SURE!

MAJOR HANSON HURRIED INTO THE HOUSE, STUMBLING DOWN THE HALL TO THE DARK LIBRARY. HE STOPPED SUDDENLY AS HE REACHED THE DOOR... AND STARED AT THE GLEAMING EYES BURNING IN THE BLACKNESS BEYOND.



HE PRESSED POINT-BLAZE AGAIN AND AGAIN. THE VILE PREDICIOUS BEAST JUST STOOD THERE... SMILING AT HIM...

MY GOD! THE SILVER BULLETS! THEY DON'T KILL HIM? I COULDNT MISS... NOT AT THIS RANGE...

OUTSIDE, THE MEN HEARD THE SHOTS AND TOOK FOR THE HOUSE... THE MAJOR STUMBLED TO THE LIBRARY LIGHT SWITCH, FLICKING IT ON. HE SHRIEKED AS THE GLOW FLOODGED THE ROOM...

YAAAAAHHHHHH!! IN THERE! IT'S THE LIBRARY! MAJOR! HE'S PROBABLY BEING ATTACKED BY THE WEREWOLF!

MAJOR ELWOOD HANSON STOOD BEFORE THE FULL-LENGTH LIBRARY MIRROR, SNARLING AND SHRIEKING, STARING HORRIFICALLY AT THE BULLET HOLES HE'D MADE WHEN HE'D SHOT AT HIS OWN REFLECTION.

GOOD LOAD!

CHOKE!



MAJOR HANSON MOVED FORWARD SLOWLY. HIS ARMS READY. THEN, ALL AT ONCE, HE SAW IT... THE HARRY FACE, THE GLEAMING Fangs FLASHED FROM BEHIND THE GRINNING, CRUEL MOUTH. HE SCREAMED...

IT'S THE WEREWOLF!



AND THAT'S THE FIRST SCREAM-STORY IN MY NEW PUTRID PENNEDICAL, FIENDL. NATURALLY, THEY SHOT MAJOR WEREWOLF AFTER THAT. IN FACT THEY PUNCHED HIM SO FULL OF SILVER BULLETS, HE HAD TO BE LOWERED INTO HIS GRAVE WITH A DERRICK! THEN A COUPLE OF BRAVE BOYARDS HEARD ABOUT

THE SILVER AND BUT THAT'S ANOTHER STORY! I'LL TELL THAT UP SOME OTHER TIME. NOW, THE VAULT-KEEPER AMBROSIE WITH HIS CREEPY CONTRIBUTION TO THIS MURKIO MEAL. I'LL BE BACK LATER. BYE, NOW.



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

WELL, NOW! AND HOW THAT C.R. HAS CURDLED YOUR ANEMIC BLOOD, IT'S TIME FOR YOUR MOST IN THE VAULT OF HORROR, THE VAULT-REEPER... HANDEL, HE! TO ENTERTAIN YOU WITH A SPINE-TICKLING, MEUSEATING HOUELETTE FROM MY CREEP COLLECTION. LET'S SEE! OH... LET'S NOT SEE! TEE! THIS IS A GOOD BOY ONE! IT'S CALLED...

BLIND ALLEYS

THE "HOME" WAS OLD AND PAINT-STARVED AND DRAFTY AND BADLY IN NEED OF REPAIR. THE ROOF LEAKED AND THE WINDOWS RATTLED AND WERE COVERED WITH YEARS OF DUST AND SPITTLE. THE INMATEE OF THE HOME WALKED GRIM-FACED AND SILENT THROUGH CRACKED PLASTER HALLS, OR SAT IN DUNGY ROOMS ON CRAMPING BEDS. THEY SHIVERED IN THE COLD WHEN WINTER CAME... WHEN THERE WAS NO STEAM TO WARM THE RUSTED RADIATORS...



...AND THEY SHELTERED IN THE HEAT WHEN SUMMER BURNED... WHEN LONG-DISCHARGED FANS LAY IDLE AND UNREPAIRED AND UNABLE TO WAIT A BREATH OF COOL, THE RHYME.



BUT THEY COULD NOT SEE THE PAINT-PEELED WALLS... THE DIRT CLOUDED WINDOWS... THE DUSTY AND COB-HEADED HALLS OF THIS, THEIR HOME... THESE INMATES, THEY COULD NOT SEE THE RATS SCAMPERING ACROSS THE UNWASHED FLOORS...



... AS THIS WAS A "HOME" FOR THE BLIND... FOR WRETCHED SOULS WHO LIVED IN WORLD'S OF DARKNESS... WHO STARED WITH UNSEEING EYES AT THE MISERY AROUND THEM... AND THEY KNEW AND HATED ALL OF IT...



FOR THE LOSS OF ONE SENSE ONLY TENDS TO SHARPEN THE OTHERS... TO TUNE THEM MORE FINELY... TO MAKE THEM MORE SAVAGE. THE INMATES KNEW BECAUSE THEY COULD TASTE... AND TOUCH... AND SMELL AND HEAR. THEY COULD TASTE THE SPOILED AND ROTTED FOOD PLACED BEFORE THEM AT MEALTIMES...



THEY COULD TOUCH THE STICKY, FILTHY COOKERS... THE DUST LAYERS COVERING EVERYTHING...



THEY COULD SMELL THE FOUL ODORS OF MOLDEN AND FAULTY PLUMBING AND POOR SANITATION AND NEGLECT...



THEY COULD HEAR THE RATS SCAMPERING AND THE ROACHES CRAWLING AND THE FERMENTES BURNING AND THE LICE AND BED-BUGS AND FLIES AND A THOUSAND OTHER CREATURES OF FILTH THAT MOVED...



AND THEY COULD HEAR OTHER-creatures TOO... OTHER CREATURES OF FILTH THAT MOVED. THEY COULD HEAR MR. BRUNSWALD, THE MONEY DIRECTOR, IN HIS OFFICE-APARTMENT DOWNTOWNS, ENTERTAINING HIS LATEST LARY-FRIEND WITH THE MONEY HE'D BAWED ON THEM... THE INMATES...



THEY COULD HEAR HIS ALMOST MANIACAL LAUGHTER AND THE CLINKING OF CHAMPAGNE GLASSES. THEY COULD SMELL THE MOUTH-WATERING ODOURS OF THE LAVISH SUPPER HE WAS ENJOYING, AND THEY COULD SEE, IN THEIR SHINY EYES, THE LUXURIES WITH WHICH HE'D SELFISHLY SURROUNDED HIMSELF AT THEIR EXPENSE...



YES, BUNKER GRUNWALD HAD INDEED SURROUNDED HIMSELF WITH LUXURIES... PAID FOR WITH THE ALLOTMENTS SPENT HIM FOR EACH BOUND INMATE. BUT PAINT AND PLASTER DREARY HALLS THAT THEY'D NEVER SEE, WHEN HE COULD HAVE AN AIR-CONDITIONER FOR THOSE SWEATY SUMMER DAYS...



WHY HAVE THOSE POOR Miserable
BLIND FOOLS BEAUTY? IF THEY
COULD NOT APPRECIATE BEAUTY,
BUNKER GRUNWALD'D FELT THAT
WHAT HE'D SKIMPED ON THE
INMATES... CUT CORNERS HERE...
DENIED THERE... AND WITH THE
SUBPLUSES, HE'D SUPPLIED HIMSELF
WITH BEAUTY.

FINE FURNITURE... 4000 BOOKS,
PLUSH RUGS... DIVINE DRAPES,
AN OCCASIONAL EVENING OF FEMALE
COMPANIONSHIP... THEY WERE
ALL BUNKER'S TO ENJOY. HE'D
EVEN BOUGHT A DOG... A VIOLENT
DOG. HE'D HAD A GOOD REASON.

WHY LAUNDER SHEETS AND BLANKETS AND
CLOTHES OF DIRT-SQUARE AND SWEAT-STAIN THAT
THEY'D NEVER SEE, WHEN HE COULD HAVE A HEATER
FOR THOSE COLD, WINTER NIGHTS...



FOR BUNKER'D KNOWN THAT ANOTHER
SENSE HAD REPLACED THE INMATES'
SENSE OF SIGHT... A DEEP-SEEDED
SENSE... BROWNING EACH DAY, HE'D
SEEN IT IN THEIR WEED-BLIND
FACES, IN THEIR SILENT SMILE
FACES. HE'D SEEN THEIR BROWNS
HATE SO HE'D BOUGHT THE DOG
FOR PROTECTION.



AND WITH THE DOG AT HIS SIDE, BUNKER'D WALKED SELF-CONFIDENTLY BEFORE THEM, KNOWING THAT HIS SIGHT AND THE DOG'S STRENGTH WOULD KEEP HIM FROM HARM.



AND SO, HE'D BEEN ABLE TO CONTINUE TO ENJOY HIS FIERCELY LITTLE AMUSEMENTS... LIKE TRIPPING Helpless, unsuspecting inmates as they'd totter blindly by him...



...OR REMOVING SOMETHING THAT THEY'D COME TO KNOW WAS THERE AND COUNTED ON...



...OR ADDING SOMETHING NEW...



...OR BEING JUST MEAN...



YES, SUMMERS AMUSED HIMSELF WITH HIS CHARGES' INABILITY TO SEE. HE'D BEEN sadistic WITH HIS TORTURES, AND HE'D BROWN FAT ON HIS GENITALS--AND HIS CHARGES HAD SAT IN THEIR WORLD OF DARKNESS AND WAITED LISTENING.

SUMMER... PLEASE! IT'S THE DOG! HE MAKES ME NERVOUS! I'M AFRAID OF DOGS!

I'M SORRY, BABY
HERE, BOY! HERE!

...AND TONIGHT, THEIR OPPORTUNITY CAME...

HUNGRY, DOGGY? NICE, DOGGY?
HERE, DOGGY! HERE'S BONE MEAT!



...LISTENING FOR THEM...
YOU STAY OUT THERE TILL SUMMER IS THROUGH!



...SO THEY LURED THE DOG DOWN INTO THE OLD MUSTY CELLAR OF THE HOME WITH SOME MEAT-SCRAPES THEY'D SAVED FROM THEIR SCANT MEALS...

IN HERE, DOGGY!
COME, BOY!

QUICKLY! LOCK
HIM UP!



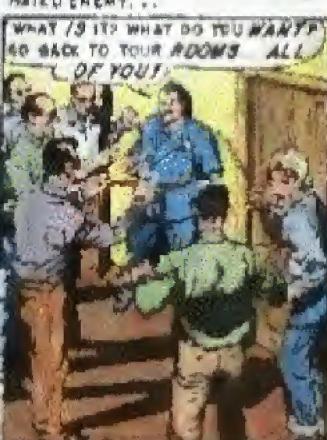
AND THEN THEY WAITED. THEY
WAITED FOR GUNNER'S FRIEND OF
THE EVENING TO LEAVE...



THEY WAITED FOR GUNNER TO KISS
HIS DOG...



...AND THEN THEY STRUCK, BLINDLY,
UNSEEING... THEY SURROUNDED THEIR
HATED ENEMY...



...AND DRAGGED HIM TO THE CELLAR TO... TO
ANOTHER WAITING CUBICLE...



BUT GUNNER'S ONLY ANSWER WAS THE SOFT WHINE OF
THE DOG IN THE ADJOINING CUBICLE...



THEN THEY BEGAN TO WORK. THEY DRAGGED OUT OLD
BEAMS AND RUSTY RAILS AND JUNK-HOLE STAKES.



AND THEY WENT THROUGH THE HOME AND CUT AND
RIPPED AND CHOPPED THE LUMBER THEY NEEDED...



BUNNER LISTENED TO THE HAMMERING ECHOING THROUGH THE CELLAR. HE LISTENED TO THEIR SINGLES AND CHATTER, AND HE WONDERED...

WHAT ARE THEY UP TO? WHAT ARE THEY MAKING?



AND HE LISTENED AS THE NIGHT PASSED AND DAWN CAME AND THE DOG IN THE CUBICLE NEXT DOOR GREW HUNGRY AND PACED AND BROWLED AND SCRATCHED AS ITS STOMACH GROWLED...

FESSO BRUTUS, YOU FOOLIE! WE'LL GET WILD IF YOU DON'T! WE'LL BE DANGEROUS!

WE KNOW, MR. GRUNWALD!



THE DAY PASSED AND NIGHT CAME AGAIN. BUNNER'S OWN STOMACH ACHED WITH HUNGER, AND STILL THEY HAMMERED AND SAWED AND LAUGHED AND TALKED...

WHAT ARE YOU MAKING?
YOU'LL SEE,
MR. GRUNWALD!
WHAT ARE YOU
GOING TO DO!



THE DOG IN THE NEXT ENTRANCE HOWLED ALL THAT NIGHT, SLOBBERING AND SNARLING AND SCRATCHING. BUNNER SHUDDERED. THE DOG WAS A BEAST, HOW... A HUNGER-CRAZED BEAST. AND THE HAMMERING WENT ON...

FOOD! GIVE ME
SOME FOOD!
PLEASE

DO YOU CALL
WHAT YOU'VE
BEEN FEEDING
US FOOD, MR.
GRUNWALD?



DAWN CAME AGAIN AND THE SECOND DAY PASSED. NEXT DOOR, THE DOG WAS FIGHTING WITH ITSELF, THROWNING ITSELF AGAINST THE CUBICLE DOORS AND HOWLING MADLY.

BRUTUS WILL KILL ANYONE THAT SETS FOOT IN THERE NOW!



BUNNER HIMSELF WAS HALF-CRAZED WITH HUNGER AS THE THIRD NIGHT CAME. AND THEN, TOWARDS MIDNIGHT, THE HAMMERING STOPPED. THE CELLAR WAS SUDDENLY PLUGGED WITH LIGHT, EVEN BRUTUS STOPPED STARLING IN ANTICIPATION...

THEY'RE... THEY'RE OPENING
MY CUBICLE...



THEY STOOD BEFORE HIM... DIRTY, SWEATED, TIRED FROM LONG HOURS OF LABOR... THE DIRECTOR... THE BLIND UNSEEING CARPENTERS. BUNNER BLINKED OUT AT THEM...

COME, MR. GRUNWALD!
YOU ARE FREE TO GO!

FOLLOW US, MR. GRUNWALD! WE BUILT THIS JUST FOR YOU! IT LEADS TO THE CELLAR STEPS... AND FREEDOM!



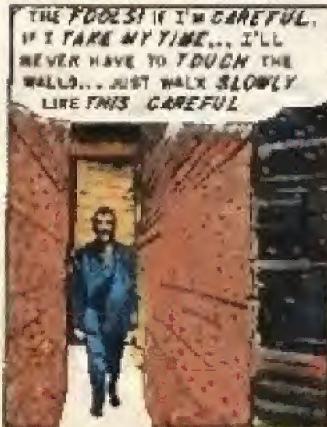
GUNNER STOOD UP AS THEY DARTED OFF. HE COULD HEAR THEIR FOOTSTEPS FADE AS THEY ROUNDED CORNER AND RAN DOWN LONG CORRIDOR THAT TURNED AND TWISTED AND DOUBLED BACK. GUNNER STARED...

THEY... THEY BUILT A MAZE? A PUZZLE? I HAVE TO FIGURE IT OUT!



GUNNER LAUGHED TO HIMSELF AS HE STARTED OUT OF HIS CIRCLE...

THE FOOL! IF I'M CAREFUL, IF I TAKE MY TIME... I'LL NEVER HAVE TO TOUCH THE WALLS... JUST WALK SLOWLY LIKE THIS. CAREFUL



A YOUNG BEHIND GUNNER FROZE HIS BLOOD A SHRIEK AND A SQUEAK OF A DOOR OPENING

BRUTUS! HUNGER-CRAZED BRUTUS! THEY'VE FREED HIM TOO!



HE BUSHED AGAINST THE RAZOR BLADES, SLASHING HIS FLESH, HE STUMPLED AND GOT UP... RAN ON JACKET-EN-FILE DOWN THRU THE TWISTING, DOUBLING-BACK MAZE CORRIDORS WITH THE RAZOR-LINED WALLS AND THE SNARLING HOUND CLOSE BEHIND.



AND THEN SUMMER SAW THE BLEMING SLITTERING SLIVERS OF STEEL EMBEDDED IN THE MAZE WALLS...

RAZOR BLADES! THE WALLS ARE LINED WITH RAZOR BLADES! THEY WANT ME TO CUT MYSELF!

HURRY, MR. BRUNWALD! HURRY!



GUNNER BEGAN TO RUN. HE HAD TO REACH FREEDOM BEFORE THAT STALKING DOG CAUGHT HIM. HE RAN DOWN THE TWISTING MAZE CORRIDOR. THE SOUND OF THE LOPING SNARLING DOG BEHIND HIM



AND THEN SOME IDIOT TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS

WHICH WASN'T SO BAD

OOPS! WRONG TURN, BURNER! NOW, NOW! DON'T DO THAT AGAIN! IT'S ALMOST LIKE BEING BLIND! NELL, NODDES. THAT'S MY SICKENING STORY FOR THIS FIRST ISSUE OF G.K.'S NEW MAGAZINE! NOW, IT'S TIME TO GLIDE

THE VAULT OF HORROR AND TURN YOU BACK TO ME.

AS THE DISMEMBERED PARTS OF A CORPSE SAID WHEN THEY WERE SHIPPED TO THE UNDERTAKER: "WE'LL GET TOGETHER AGAIN!" BY G.K.



GONE TO SEED

It was back-breaking work, but it had to be done. Right away, too. He couldn't risk hiding the body of his wife in the cellar any longer . . . one of the farm hands might accidentally stumble over the corpse and start asking mighty dangerous questions. It was urgent, Dan Gret knew, to dispose of Emily right now, in the field he was plowing for spring planting. No sense in leaving a murdered wife around for the law to find!

Dan Gret heard the farm hands chattering over in the next field . . . he'd have to bawl 'em out about all this horsing around on his time. But at the moment he was too busy trying to gouge a hole in the ground. At first he'd been worried about the noise his shovel would make as he burrowed into the earth, but that had been taken care of without much trouble. The motor of the idling plow made so much noise that those loafers working for him wouldn't pay him any mind. And the bulk of the machine had been carefully maneuvered into place so that it acted as a shield between him and the overalled men seedig the adjoining acre. This, Dan Gret had resolved, was to be a private burial!

Dan Gret crouched low, in the shadow of the plow. By stretching out full length, he managed to rug the corpse from behind the grumbling machine and nudge it into the makeshift grave. There would be less than a foot of dirt blanketing Emily's body . . . but as soon as the hired hands got a day off he'd hurry back and dig a good deep hole to house the coepse. Within a few weeks the seeds'd be sprouting and the field would burst into various bloom. Dan Gret grinned as he patted the last shovelful of dirt into place. Not only

was he getting rid of this devil he'd grown to hate . . . he was also helping to fertilize the coming crop!

He straightened up and surveyed his work with a critical eye. His eyes popped: one of Emily's hands was sticking up out of the soil! He hunched forward . . . and heard, with dread, the sound of voices approaching. Those bums who worked for him were coming across the field in his direction!

Dan Gret sprang toward the droneing plow. If he could move the machine sideways just a few feet . . . set it directly over Emily's body . . . the danger of the noose could be averted. He turned once, to look back at the tell-tale mound . . . and his foot slid out from under him. His arms flailed the air frantically as he tried to regain his balance; his hand crushed sharply against the gear lever. The plow started immediately to swing in a tumbling circle, because of the way he had crammed the steering wheel. In moroalit's horror he saw the glittering blades bearing down on him!

Dan Gret screeched in alarm. Then the razor sharp metal slashed through his flesh . . . the ponderous steel crunched over his writhing body . . . the huge wheels groaned over him so that he was drenched in his own gushing blood.

By the time the farm-hands reached him, Dan Gret was slashed almost beyond recognision. With gaping wonder the hired men stared down at Dan Gret's corpse . . . buried alongside that of his wife Emily, in the gory, blood-spattered grave. It was a real family plot!

E.C. WENT TO SEA IN SEARCH OF ANOTHER NEW TREND...



AND WE CAME UP WITH...
SAGAS OF THE SEA, SHIPS, PLUNDER AND...

PIRACY

NOW YOU SEARCH
FOR IT!

BUT IF YOU CAN'T FIND PIRACY
AT YOUR LOCAL NEWSSTAND, YOU
CAN SUBSCRIBE! JUST FILL OUT
THE COUPON AND MAIL, TOGETHER
WITH ONE HUNDRED PIECES OF
CENT (THAT'S ONE BUCK, LAND-
LUBBERS!), TO:

THE SEA-SICK EDITORS OF
PIRACY
ROOM 206
723 LAFAYETTE STREET
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

OKAY, BLUE RATS! YOU SHANGHAIED ME!
I ENCLOSE \$1.00 FOR THE NEXT EIGHT ISSUES
OF PIRACY!

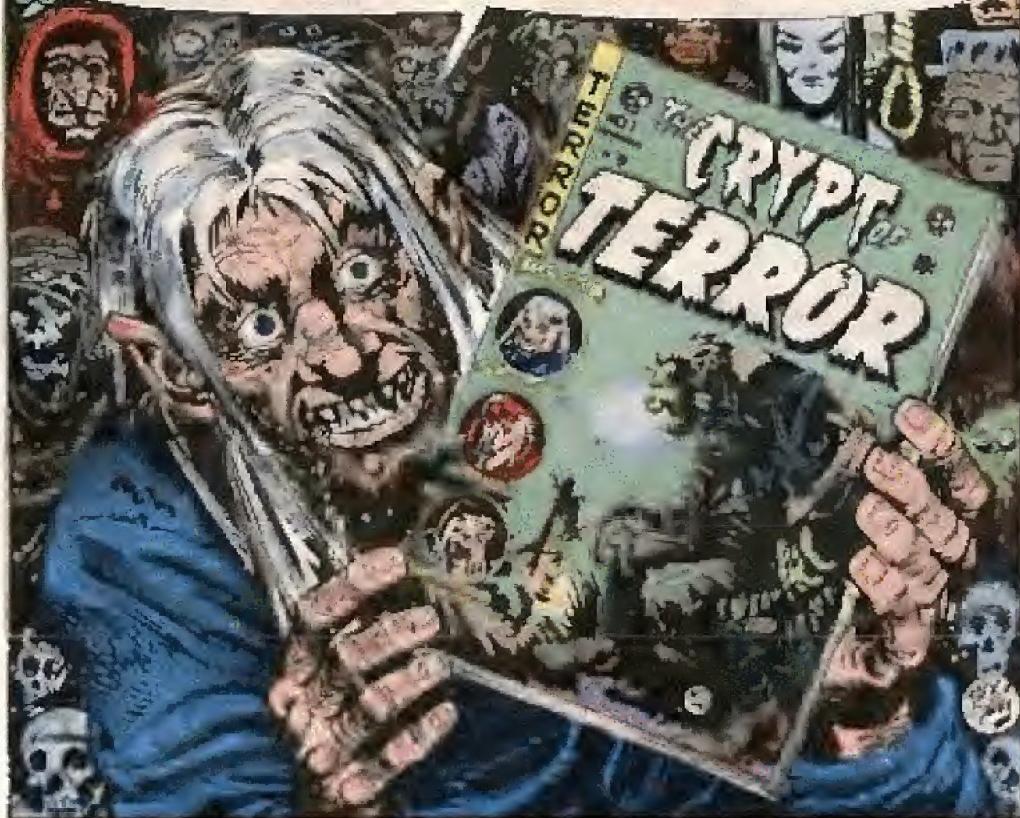
NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

A POINT OF ORDER! IF YOU'RE EXPECTING E.C.'S NEWEST HORROR MAG TO BE BETTER THAN TALES FROM THE CRYPT, THE VAULT OF HORROR, AND THE HAUNT OF FEAR, YOU'LL BE SADLY DISAPPOINTED! IT'S ONLY JUST AS GOOD!



INVESTIGATE YOUR FAVORITE NEWSSTAND FOR THE FIRST "JUST-AS-GOOD" ISSUE! HOWEVER IF YOU'RE TIED UP WITH RED TAPE (ADHESIVE, THAT IS!) AND YOU'D RATHER SUBSCRIBE, FILL OUT THE COUPON AND SEND IN, TOGETHER WITH AN UNDOCTORED PHOTO OF GEORGE WASHINGTON ON A \$1.00 BILL. YOU'LL RECEIVE A UNCROPPED ISSUES IN THE MAIL.

THE CRYPT-KEEPER

ROOM 706
225 LAFAYETTE STREET
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

HERE'S MY BUCK SEND ME THE NEXT 6 ISSUED OF YOUR NEWEST MAG, THE CRYPT OF TERROR.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ LINE NO. _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

HERE'S HOW ONE FAILURE TURNED HIS MISERABLE LIFE INTO A HORRIBLE...

SUCCESS STORY



THE POLICE SURGEON INSERTED THE HOLLOW NEEDLE INTO ELMER'S ARM AND SECONDS LATER THE SODIUM PENTOTHAL SOLUTION WAS FLOWING INTO HIS BLOODSTREAM, TAKING ITS EFFECT. ELMER'S SHRIIL MANIACAL LAUGHTER FADED INTO A WHEEZING BARK. THE RABID FURY OF HIS CONVULSIVE STRUGGLES SUBSIDED INTO Helpless EXHAUSTION. THE THREE GRANNY POLICEMEN RELAXED THEIR HOLD THIR, AND MOPPED THEIR SHEET-BEADED BROWNS. ELMER PRESTON SLUMPED LIMPLY ON THE GRASSY SOFA, HIS PLACED FACE DRAINED TO A YELLOW-SPEECHLESS HUE. HIS USUALLY BOLD, LIVID-BROWN EYES WERE BLAZED AND STARED RON. HE STARTED TO SPEAK, WITHOUT EMOTION, IN A QUAKING MONOTONE...

"I'M FEAD I DIDIT! IT HAD TO BE THIS WAY. DON'T YOU SEE?"

"NO, MR. PRESTON, WE DON'T SEE IT.
YOU'D BETTER TELL US ABOUT IT!"



ELMER'S FACE TOOK ON A THOUGHTFUL EXPRESSION AND HIS EYES SHADED OVER WITH A DISTANT LOOK, HAUNTED WITH MEMORIES OF THE PAST. HE SIGHED DEEPLY, THEN SPOKE AGAIN IN A COLORLESS DRONING VOICE.

"...I WAS ALWAYS A TIMID MAN, IT'S NOT GOOD FOR A MAN TO BE TIMID... ESPECIALLY A MARRIED MAN, ESPECIALLY A MAN MARRIED TO A WOMAN LIKE IDA!"



"MATES, WE COULD HAVE BEEN HAPPY TOGETHER IN OUR LITTLE APARTMENT... IDA AND I. BUT ONE EVENING HER FOLKS CAME TO DINNER. HER FATHER WAS ALL TENSE, BURSTING WITH NEWS THAT HE FINALLY EXPLODED ON ME AT DESSERT..."

"ELMER, YOU MUST BEA WONDERING HOW... WHY, NO,
COME WIN AND I DON'T GIVE YOU TWO A WEDDING OFF!"



CH. CHARLES

SURE YOU WONDERED!
WELL, SON... WE'VE GOT
A SURPRISE! WE'RE
GIVING YOU A STARTON
A HOME OF YOUR
OWN! ONE THOU-
SAND DOLLARS
FOR A DOWN
PAYMENT...

**ONE
THOUS.**
WHY, MR.
WALLACE!
I SIMPLY
KNOW WHAT
TO SAY...

'I SHOULD HAVE SAID, "NO THANK YOU!", BUT I SAW NO MANNER TRAP
AT THE MOMENT. AND WHEN ENJOYING
DODD WILL, MR. WALLACE OFFERED
ME HIS HAND, I CLAMPED IT SHATE-
FULLY...

JUST BE GOOD TO
MY DAUGHTER,
ELMER... AND BE
HAPPY TOGETHER!

'NOW THAT I THINK BACK, IT BEENS
THAT TOA MUST HAVE KNOWN ALL
THE TIME. BUT THAT MEANS SHE RAN
TO HER FATHER, THREW HER ARMS
AROUND HIS NECK, AND WEEP FOR
JOY...

OH, DADDY! DADDY, IT'S WORTH
YOU'RE SO BUD-
ANY SACRI-
FICE TO GIVE
YOU AND ELMER
OUR CHILDREN
A PROPER START

'FOR AN ECSTATIC TWO WEEKS, TOA AND I HOUSE
HUNTED. WE FOUND THIS PLACE... SMALL, COMFORTA-
BLE, A DREAM COTTAGE. THE DOWN PAYMENTS FURNISH-
ING THE PLACE EMPTIED MY BANK ACCOUNT, BUT I
WAS BLISSFULLY HAPPY. THE SUNDAY AFTER WE MOVED
IN, THE WALLACES CAME TO SEE OUR NEST...'.

I DON'T
UNDER-
STAND,
MR. WAL-
LACE...

YOU REMEMBER I SAID WITH AND I
I WERE MAKING A SACRIFICE? POINT,
POINT, TO HELP YOU GET STARTED IN HEMBENTS
YOUR OWN HOME, ELMER...

BET TO
THE POINT?

WELL, WE'RE
HAVIN'
TROUBLE
MAKIN'
THIS MEET,
ELMER.

THE POINT IS, ELMER, WE HAD TO GO
INTO HOCK TO GET THAT THOUSAND
DOLLARS FOR TOLL AND THEM
BUSINESS FLOWED DOWN, AND...
RIGHT NOW. WHAT WITH WHAT I
DUE... I...

'I WAS BEING TAKEN FOR A WELL-PLANNED KIDE...
AND MY LOVING SISIE HAD THE STEERING WHEEL IN HER
OWN LITTLE GLUTCHING HANDS...

WE CAN'T LET MOTHER AND DADDY
SUFFER. NOT AFTER ALL THEY'VE
ODDE FONUS, CAN WE, DEARY TELL
THEM THEY'RE WELCOME TO SHARE
WHAT WE HAVE UNTIL THINGS ARE
BETTER. TELL THEM!

HUH... UH,
THAT'S...
THAT'S RIGHT?
OF COURSE!

'THAT WAS THE FIRST FAINT RUMBLING OF THE TEM-
PEST YET TO COME. THE WALLACES GAVE UP THEIR
APARTMENT AND MOVED IN WITH US. TOA WAS A MOST
GENEROUS DAUGHTER...

RIGHT IN HERE, MOTHER AND DADDY! WELL
LET THEM HAVE OUR ROOM, ELMER. IT'S
CLOSER TO THE BATHROOM, AND SINCE
IT'S ONLY TEMPORARY



"TEMPORARY, SHE SAID' BUT BEFORE I KNEW IT, THEY'D BEEN THERE FIVE WEEKS. I COULD JUST ABOUT MANAGE TO MEET MY BILLS, IF THERE WEREN'T OTHER DEBTS ON MY SMALL INCOME."

BUT, I CAN'T AFFORD A T.V. SET! MR. WALLACE, NOT EVEN A SMALL-SCREEN SET!"

THAT'S GRATITUDE! I GIVE YOU \$1000 FOR A HOME, AND YOU EXPECT ME TO FURNISH IT, TOO?"

"BELIEVE ME, I'M GRATEFUL... BUT THAT MONEY WAS JUST ENOUGH TO LET ME GO INTO DEBT FOR THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS. SADDLED WITH A MORTGAGE, I've GOT PAYMENTS TO MEET... ON THAT... AND THE OTHER FURNITURE... AND..."

THEN A FEW MORE DOLLARS A MONTH WON'T HURT! TELL YOU WHAT? I'll PUT THE TEN BUCKS DOWN ON THE T.V. SET!"

"AFTER MR. WALLACE GOT HIS T.V. SET, MR. WALLACE HAD A REQUEST: YOU'LL SEE, ELMER! WITH WHAT YOU GAVE ON LAUNDRY FOR THE FOUR OF US, THIS WASHING MACHINE WILL PAY FOR ITSELF!"

"MONTHS WENT BY, MY BURDEN GREW AND WEIGHED UPON ME LIKE A MILLSTONE. ONE DAY I FOUND THE COURAGE TO TALK TO IDA..."

I LIKE YOUR VOLKES, IDA, BUT I CAN'T GO ON SUPPORTING THEM FOR...

SUPPORTING?" AFTER WHAT THEY'VE DONE? WHAT A LOAD-SOME WAY TO REPAY THEM FOR THEIR GENEROSITY!"

"THE CORNERS OF IDA'S MOUTH DROPPED, AND HER EYES WERE COLD AND HATE... PIERCING ME THOROUGH AS SHE SPOKE..."

"YOU'RE BLAMING MOTHER AND DADDY BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT A GOOD PROVIDER. YOU MIGHT AS WELL KNOW IT, ELMER. I'M NOT SATISFIED... NOT AT ALL SATISFIED. I THOUGHT YOU HAD AMBITION! I THOUGHT YOU'D GO PLACES... GET AHEAD IN THE WORLD. INSTEAD, YOU'RE STUCK IN A POOR PAYING JOB."

IDA SPOKE BITTERLY AND LOUDLY... LOUD ENOUGH FOR HER PARENTS TO HEAR. THEY ACCEPTED IT AS AN INVITATION TO JUNK HER FIERCE HABANIQUE.

SOMETIMES I WISH YOU HADN'T... WILL, I'D BETTER NOT SAY WHAT I'M THINKING!"

I THOUGHT YOU HAD ANY, SON? I THOUGHT YOU'D WANT TO GET AHEAD!"

"DRIVEN MORE BY DESPAIR AND DEBT THAN BY THEIR SCORN, I FINALLY GATHERED THE COURAGE TO ASK MY BOSS, MR. BENTLEY, FOR A RAISE. BUT THE MINUTE I ENTERED HIS PLUSH OFFICE..."

"I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT YOUR WORK, PRESTON. YOU'VE BEEN BETTING GAME-LESS LATELY. SLOPPY... VERY SLOPPY!"

"... I DIDN'T REALIZE, MR. BENTLEY! I'M SORRY; SIR! I'LL DO BETTER IN THE FUTURE! I PROMISE!"

'I HAD UNCOVERED A DAN BY COMPLAINING AGAINST
TON'S POLICIES, AND FROM THAT DAY ON, A SPITEFUL
TORMENT OF CRITICISM POURED THROUGH THE
FLORALGATES AT ME.'

'WHAT ABOUT THAT
RAISE I TOLD YOU
TO ASK FOR, ELMERT?
WHEN ARE YOU GOING
TO GET ENOUGH
NEVER!'

'ASK FOR? YOU DON'T
ASK FOR A RAISE? YOU
DEMAND IT! THAT'S THE
ONLY WAY TO GET AHEAD.
BY DEMANDING...'

'HOW COULD I TELL THEM MR. GENTLY HAD MORE THAN
REFUSED ME A RAISE? THEY GAVE ME NO PEACE, FROM
THE MOMENT I CAME HOME FROM WORK.'

'WELL, ELMERT, HOW'D YOU
MAKE OUT? DID YOU TELL THAT
BOSS OF YOURS TO COME
ADDRESS ME AT A NEW BOY?

'I TOLD HIM
NOTHING, MR. WALLACE.
NOBODY TALKS THAT
WAY TO MR. GENTLY!'

'...AND I'D ALWAYS GET THE SAME
RESPONSE...

'YOU DIDN'T DOOD LORD, MAN!
DON'T YOU WANT TO GET AHEAD
IN THIS WORLD??'

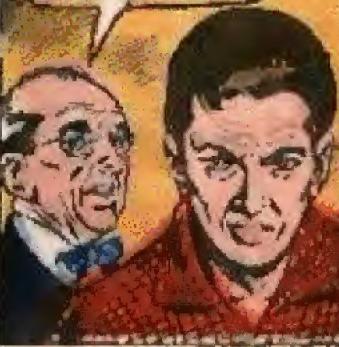
'EVERY MEAL BECAME A NIGHT-
MARE, FROM THE TIME I'LL SIT
DOWN.'

'YOU'RE A FAILURE,
ELMER! I CAN'T
STAND A
FAILURE!'

'ALL MY
LIFE I
FOUGHT TO
GET AHEAD...

'I'D FORCE MYSELF TO EAT, AND
THE TASTELESS FOOD WOULD SOUR
ON THE WAY DOWN.'

'DON'T WASTE YOUR BREATH,
HELMERT! YOU CAN'T TURN A
JELLY-FISH INTO A TIGER
SHARK, I ALWAYS SAY!'



'SUDDENLY THERE'D BE A VIOLENT CHURNING IN THE PIT OF MY
STOMACH AND I'D HAVE TO RUN FROM THE ROOM.'

'GO ON! RUN! IF I WERE
IN YOUR SHOES, I WOULDN'T
WANT TO HEAR THE TRUTH
ABOUT MYSELF, EITHER!'

'BEEF! YOU TRY TO
TELL HIM SOMETHING
FOR HIS OWN GOOD
AND HE RUNS OFF IN
A HUFF! HE'S INSULTED!

'I MADE IT TO THE BATHROOM. NOT'S OF
THE TIME, AND ALL BUT HEAVE UP MY
INTESTINES.'

'YOU MARRIED
A REAL
LEMON, BOY!

'HE'LL NEVER
AMOUNT TO
ANYTHING!' (CHOKE.)



'NOW DID THE TORMENT STOP WHEN WE WENT TO BED.
IDA WOULD HAB ME TILL SHE WAS HOARSE, AND I'D
COVER MY HEAD WITH MY PILLOW, BUT I'D STILL HEAR!

ONLY SIXTY-SEVEN MISERABLE
DOLLARS A WEEK... IN THESE DAYS.
I'M ASHAMED FOR MOTHER AND DADDY
TO KNOW, BUT OF COURSE THEY DO
KNOW. THEY KNOW THE KIND OF CLOTHES
I WEAR... THEY SEE THE FURNITURE...
THREADBARE... JUNK!'

PLEASE...
IDA! IT'S
LATE.

'WHEN I'D REACH ALL I COULD
STAND, I'D HURRY FROM THE LIV-
ING ROOM.'

'NEVER MIND, MOTHER! FROM NOW
ON, I'LL DO THE BUYING! WE
CAN'T AFFORD MUCH, MAYBE, BUT
WHAT WE DO GET WILL BE THE
BEST!'

'EVER A LOCKED DOOR WAS NO
GUARANTEE OF PRIVACY.'

'ARE YOU GOING TO STAY IN
THERE ALL NIGHT, ELMER?
LISTEN... ABOUT THE T.V. SET?
I WAS DOWNTOWN TODAY, TALK-
ING TO A DEALER ABOUT A
TRADE-IN ON A LARGER
SCREEN, AND...'



'SO THE RONTHE DRAGGED INTO YEARS AND TIME,
WALLACE STATED ON WITH US... HASSLING ME... HUMMING...
COMPLAINING... ALWAYS COMPLAINING...'

'YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU
BOUGHT THAT HASSLING
MACHINE? I TOLD YOU
IT DIDN'T PAY TO BUY ONE.
WELL, IT'S READY FOR THE
JUKEBOX!'

'IT DON'T FEEL
LONELY THERE,
BELIEVE ME. IT'LL
HAVE THAT STINKING
TWELVE-INCH-SCREEN
T.V. SET FOR
COMPANY.'

'I WAS TOO TIMID TO ADMIT IT TO
MYSELF THEN, BUT IT'D COME TO
HATE IDA AND HER MOTHER AND
FATHER. I'D BE SHAVING IN THE
MORNING AND MY WIFE WOULD COME
IN AND THE DAY'S DRABBING WOULD
BEGIN...'

'I DON'T SEE WHY DADDY
SHOULD HAVE TO KEEP
FOUNDING IT INTO
YOU! YOU SHOULD
WANT TO GET AHEAD
YOURSELF, ELMER...'
I
KNOW
DEAR...



'THIS MORNING, AS ALWAYS, WE SAT AT THE BREAK-
FAST TABLE AND I LISTENED TO THEM TALKING... YEAH-
ING, AND NEARBY, THE STORM GATHERED. I COULD HEAR
IT RUMBLING.'

'A MAN WITHOUT AMBITION IS A WALKING
CORPSE, ELMER! I KNOW I'M REPEATING
MYSELF, BUT TRY TO BE A SUCCESS, TRY,
ELMER, ELMER! YOU LISTENING?'

HMM?
OH, YES!
YEE, I'LL
TRY!

'AND TODAY, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS, I DIDN'T
GO TO WORK. I WANDERED AROUND THE STREETS, WON-
DERING WHAT WAS WRONG WITH ME, LISTENING TO
THE STORM THUNDERING IN THE DISTANCE, COMING
CLOSER... CLOSER... READY TO BREAK AT ANY MOMENT.'

'WHY DON'T I GET AHEAD? EVERYBODY ELSE
DOES! I'VE GOT TO! IVE... HAH...HEN...
IVE... EH...EH...'



"WHEN I GOT HOME THAT NIGHT, LATE FOR DINNER, THEY JUST STARED AT ME. IDA AND MR. WALLACE AND MRS. WALLACE. THE STORM RUMBLED AROUND, THREATENING...THREATENING TO BREAK... THERE, IN MY THROBBING HEAD...AND I JUST STARED BACK AT THEM..."



"I RAN OUT...BUT NOT TO THE BATH-ROOM THIS TIME. I RAN TO THE KITCHEN...THROUGH THE RAGING STORM, I CAME BACK WITH THE MEAT CLEAVER."



AND SLOWLY, THE POLICEMEN FOLLOWED ELMER'S WILD GAZE TO THE DINNER TABLE...TO THE MEAT PLACE, SETTING... AND THE PLATES WITH THEIR HOLLOWING FACES STARING BACK AT THEM...



"THEN, SUDDENLY, THE STORM TORE LOOSE... HOWLING, SCREAMING-BLACK AROUND ME... THUNDERING... WILD TORNADY-FURY AND ABOVE, THE STORM, THEIR VOICES... THEIR HASTY VOICES...

"IS THAT THE WAY TO TRY TO GET AHEAD... STAY HOME FROM WORK?"



"ELMER PRESTOR STARED STRAIGHT AHEAD, SMILING. THE WIFE SIGHED RETURNED TO HIS EYES, AND HE CHOKED OUT MORE WORDS BETWEEN SHORT, HIGH-PITCHED BURSTS OF LAUGHTER...

"THE STORM SHRIEKED IN MY BRAIN. WHITE BLINDING LIGHTNING FLASHES EXPLODED. THE BLACK FURY TURNED RED, RED, SPURTING RED AS I SWUNG THE CLEAVER."



"SO YOU SEE, I... EH, EH... DID GET AHEAD... EH, EH... AFTER ALL!"



"HEM, HEM. A TRIPLE HEADER, EH, KIDDING SO, IDA AND HER FOLKS BROKE ELMER HATE, BUT THEY WENT OUT ON STAKES... IN ONE, TWO, THREE O'CLOCK, ALL RIGHT OVER THE PLATE. WELL, THE GAME'S OVER NOW, CALLED ON ACCOUNT OF METAL STORM? AND YOU KNOW I WILL, TAKE A BRAIN-CHECK TILL NEXT WE MEET. HOPE YOU LIKED MY NEW WIFE. NOW THE OLD WITCH AWAITED TO WIND UP THE PREDILECTIONS. THIS IS YOUR DAY'S WORKER, BIDDING YOU GOOD-BYE AND WISHING YOU NOTHING BUT THE BEST... NIGHTMARES!"

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

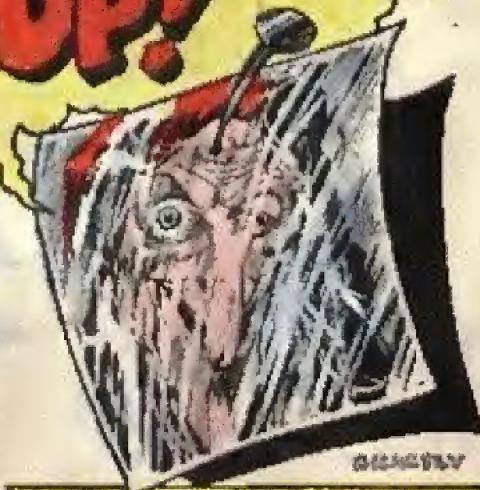
HEE, HEE! AND NOW IT'S WIND-UP SPOT IN C.H.'S NEW CREEPS COMIC, AND YOUR SHIVER-SHELF, THE OLD WITCH, IS READY TO STIR UP HER CRUDDY CAULDRON AND COOK OUT A LURID LITERARY LUNCHEON. THIS TASTY TALE OF TERROR-TREMBORS IS TOLD BY ONE TONY GARRETT. LISTEN, NOW, AS HE SPINS OUT THE DELIRIUM DISH HE CALLS...

TATTER UP!

MET 'IM TONY GARRETT. I'M NOT A BAD-LOOKIN' GUY. I'M YOUNG, TOO. THIRTY-FOUR. OKAY. SO HOW COME I GOTTA SIT AROUND ON A ROT-BEENIN' COUCH, HOLDIN' HANDS WITH A SHAMBLE-TORTURED MAG NAMED FANNY DOESN'T? HOW COME I COULD STAND THE MILDEN-YELLOWED WALL PAPERS... THE CRACKED CEILING... THE WHOLE HOUSE SMOKIN' LIKE THE BRIDE OF A DUE-UP COFFIN... AND THE STINK OF FANNY HERSELF? REAH, THAT'S RIGHT! YOU BET THE PICTURE'S FANNY. GADDE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE LOADED...

I...I BEEN MEANIN' TO ASK YOU, FANNY. I JUST DON'T KNOW HOW! Y... I... I BEEN MEANIN' TO ASK YOU IF YOU'LL MARRY ME!

OH, TONY! I'VE BEEN PRAYIN' YOU'D ASK ME... DREAMIN' OF IT... BUT NEVER REALLY BELIEVING YOU WOULD! OH, YES, TONY! YES! I WILL MARRY YOU!



DICK GRIFFITH

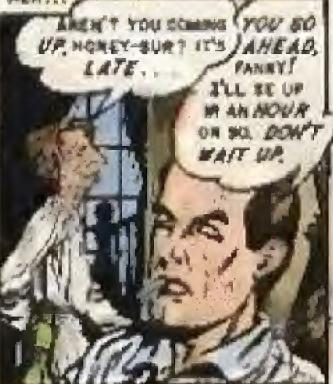
SURE I WANTED THAT INDEBONED WITCH FOR A WIFE. I WANTED TO MARRY THE HUNDRED BOUND FORTUNE TO HEARD ABOUT...THE DOUGH HER FIRST HUSBAND HAD LEFT HER. THE MISERABLE BABA WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE EVERY LAST CENT OF IT. HEE...THERE, IN THAT FOUL-SMELLIN' FILTHY HOUSE...

THEN I BUZZ...CHOWE THIS CALLS FOR A KISS!!

IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE BEEN KISSED, TONY!



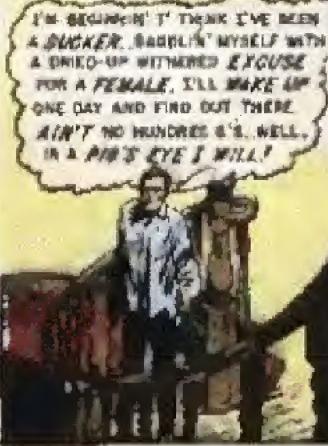
WELL, I'LL TELL THE DISBURSTIN' DETAIL EXCEPT TO SAY THAT FANNY BECAME MRS. TONY BARRETT, AND I STARTED HITTIN' THE BOTTLE TO SPACE MYSELF AGAINST LIVIN' WITH HER...



TROUBLE WITH DRINKIN' WAS IT USED TO SET ME DOWN. I'D WORRY. I'D WORRY REAL BAD...



AFTER THE FIRST TWO WEEKS, I GOT REAL DISBURSTIN'. THERE WAS NO KINT OF THE DOUGH...



SO I WENT UP INTO THE BEDROOM WHERE FANNY SAT WITH THAT STRANGLY MOP OF HAIR UP IN CURLERS. BUT I DIDN'T LOOK AT FANNY TWICE. I HEADED FOR THE CLOSET... FOR MY SUITCASE.



I BOUNCED MY SUITCASE ONTO THE BED AND TOSSED MY CLOTHES INTO IT. MY BIRD JUMPED UP LIKE A KEE TO STUNG HER, AND SHE THREW HER BONEY ARMS AROUND



TONY, I KNOW I'M OLD. I'LL BE OLD. BUT I'M RIGHA. I NEVER TOLD YOU, DID IF? I'VE GOT A LOT OF MONEY. AND I LOVE YOU, TONY... AS MUCHAS I CAN. YOU'RE HANDSOME. YOUNG. I HAVE JUST A FEW YEARS LEFT. STAY WITH ME AND MAKE THEM HAPPY YEARS, DEAR, AND WHEN I'M GONE, ALL THAT MONEY WILL BE YOURS!



WELL, IT TURNED OUT THERE WAS MONEY AFTER ALL. THE GUY'D BEEN RIGHA, SO I DID MY BEST TO MAKE FANNY HAPPY. I STAYED. BUT I WONDERED WHAT WE LIVED ON, IF SHE NEVER SPENT ANY OF HER DOUGH. AND ONE DAY, I FOUND OUT...



I'M A RAHMEN!
MRS. OGDEN
ALWAYS SELLS
ME HER OLD
HAIR.

MRS. OGDEN IS
MRS. BARRETT
NOW, MISTER.
MY WIFE! DON'T
YOU REMEMBER
WEY YOU TOLD
ME ABOUT HER...

YOU HAVE A NICE
WIFE, SIR. SHE'S
VERY GOOD TO ME.
HE ALWAYS HAS
RAHS TO SELL
ME. I'M A
RAHMEN.

MAYBE I'M
WRONG BUT
I COULD
SWEAR IT
WAS YOU
I MET THAT
NIGHT...

BUT AT THAT MINUTE, FANNY TRU-
DLED DOWN THE STAIRS WITH A LOAD
OF OLD HAIR... HERE'S MUM...
WOMEN'S DRESSER. KID' CLOTHES.
THE RAHMEN SPINNED LIKE AN
IDiot WHEN HE SAW THEM...

FINE, MRS. BARRETT! SEVEN
VERY FIRST YOU
GET SEVEN DOL-
LARS FOR THESE!
SEVEN BUCKS...
FOR THAT OLD
GARBAGE!
WHAT!

THE OLD CREEP STOPPED GOLD AND GAVE ME A
FISHY STARE, LIKE I'D INSULTED HIM. FANNY
TRIED TO COVER UP...

TONY DENT'S
NO HARD
FEELINGS!
JUST DOESN'T
UNDERSTAND
TO OVERPAID,
IT'S YOUR
BUSINESS...

YEAH, MAC. YOUR WIFE HAS
BEEN GOOD TO
ME... AND I TRY
TO BE GOOD TO
HER. HERE YOU
ARE, MRS. OGDEN...
MRS. BARRETT!

AFTER THE RAHMEN PAID FANNY, HE LEFT. I FELT PRETTY
SHOK INSIDE... YOU CAN IMAGINE...

WHAT'S WITH THIS RA
BUSINESS, BARTY? WHERE
DO YOU GET THEM?

HEY I PICK THEM UP,
TONY... HERE AND
THERE...

NICE, HUNTA BEEN MARRIED TO AN OLD HAIR MINT
ENOUGH? NOW I HAD TO FIND OUT SHE WAS A
RAH-PICKER. BESIDES... THAT WAS THE LAST
STRAM. I'D MADE UP MY MIND WHEN FANNY
ANNOUNCED AFTER LUNCH...

I'M GOING OUT, DEAR.
DON'T BE TOO LONELY
WHILE I'M GONE!

YEAH, FANNY!
BUCKY!

FANNY DIDN'T SAY WHAT SHE WAS GONNA DO FOR, BUT I KNEW
IT WAS TO DO SOME RAH-PICKIN'. WELL, THAT WAS OKAY WITH
ME. THAT SAKE ME TIME TO RUMMAGE THROUGH THE RUGGED-
CRAMMED ATTIC AFTER SOME POKIN' OF MY OWN...

I GOT TO FIND THAT DOUGH AND BET AWAY! ME... MARRIED TO A TOAD-FACED
RAH-PICKER! I'LL GO NUTS IF I MAINTAIN
LIVIN' WITH HER!

I TURNED THAT KITCHEN UPSIDE DOWN
BUT IT WAS NO SOAP. I DIDN'T FIND
A THING...

IT'S SOF TO BE IN THE
HOUSE SOMEWHERE!
YOU JUST DON'T HIDE A
HUNDRED GRAND IN A
HOUSESHOLE! I'LL
FIND IT...

TONY?
WHERE
ARE YOU,
TONY?

IT WAS FANNIE...CALLIN' ME. I
WENT DOWN AND GOT MAUDIEOUS
LOOKIN' AT HER...THAT PATCHED
AND AGED DRESS. THE TWO DIFFERENT
COLORS OF COTTON STOCKIN'..
...AND ON HER FEET...NO
KIDDIN'...SNEAKERS. SHE HAD A
DIRTY BACK STUFFED FULL OVER
HER SHOULDER...

LOOKS LIKE MINTY WAS
PRETTY GOOD TODAY.
FANNY, HOW MUCH YOU
NOT EIGHT BUGG'S
NORTH...MAYBE TEN?

WHERE
WERE
YOU,
TONY?

I DON'T STAND THE
MRS AROUND THIS
HOUSE ANY MORE, SO I
STARTED CLEANIN'
UP, IN THE ATTIC.

IN THE
ATTIC?
OH, WELL,
THAT'S
NICE...

FANNY DIDN'T SEEM DISTURBED ABOUT ME HOPPIN'
AROUND UP IN THE ATTIC, SO I FIGURED THAT'S NOT
WHERE THE HUNDRED E'S WAS STASHED AWAY. I WAS
ALL ON EBBIE WAITIN' FOR HER TO GO BUT AGAIN
BO'S I COULD START LOOKIN' SOMEWHERE ELSE.
BUT FIRST THE BARNMAN TURNED UP...

I COULD SWEAR SUCH NICE GUYS, MRS.
HE'S THE SAME GUY - BARRETT BUSH BEAU.
THAT TOLD ME ABOUT FANNY

SUCH NICE GUYS, MRS.
BARRETT BUSH BEAU.

FIFTH ROAD

FINALLY FANNY LEFT WITH HER PASSAGE AND I WENT TO
WORKIN' ONE OF THE UPSTAIRS ROOMS, FEELIN' THROUGH
BATTERED MOTH-EATEN FURNITURE, PLOWIN' THRU THE
TRASH-STUFFED CLOSET...

IT'LL TAKE ME MONTHS TO FIND THAT SCOURCH
A YEAR, MAYBE...UNLESS I'M LUCKY.

AFTER A WHILE I GOT MAD AND RIPPED OPEN THE
MATTRESS ON THE OLD BRASS BED. I WAS SO DUSTY.
I DIDN'T HEAR FANNY SNEAK UPSTAIRS AND CREEP
INTO THE ROOM LIKE A BORROWN' OLD CAT. BUT SUDDENLY E FELT HER THERE...

FANNY...
I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE STILL
CLEANING UP, TONY

I COULD TELL SHE KNEW WHAT I WAS UP TO, 'CAUSE SHE
HAD A SMILE INSIDE THAT BURSTED THROUGH HER EYES.
SHE WAS LAUGHIN' IN HER GUTS 'CAUSE I COULDN'T FIND
HER HOARD AND IT MADE ME MAD...

TEAM, THAT'S WHAT I'M DOIN', CLEANIN'
UP THIS FILTHY MESSIE! MAYBE YOU DON'T
LIKE THAT.

I SAID
I'M GLAD,
HONEY!

THAT'S HOW IT WENT FOR WEEKS,
EVERY DAY THAT A MAN CAME AND
GOT PRACTICALLY DELIRIOUS OVER
SOME FOOL RAGS MY WIFE SOLD
HIM

LOVELY... ABSOLUTELY
LOVELY. MRS. BARRETT.

AND EVERY DAY, AFTER SHE WENT
OUT BORDUNGIN' THROUGH LORD-
KNOWS-WHAT TRASH FOR RAGS, I
PLUNGED INTO MY TREASURE HUNT...



AND SHE'D COME BACK...KNOWIN'
WHAT I WAS UP TO, BUT I DIDN'T
GIVE A HORN, EXCEPT THAT SHE WAS
ALL THE TIME LAUGHIN' AT ME AND
I'D GET ALL CHOKED UP WITH HATE
FOR HER...

YOU MEN ARE ALL ALIKE. WHEN
YOU TRY TO TIDY UP A HOUSE, IT
LOOKS WORSE THAN WHEN YOU
STARTED.

FINALLY I COULDN'T TAKE IT NO MORE. I COULDN'T
STAND PUNNIN' RIVIN' ME THE HOME-GALIN'. I COULDN'T
STAND LOOKIN' AT HER. SO ONE DAY, I WENT DOWN THE
CELLAR AND STARTED DIGGIN'...BUT NOT FOR HER MONEY.



AND WHEN SHE GOT HOME THAT DAY, I LISTENED TO
HER CALL ME, BUT I DIDN'T ANSWER. I MADE BONE
HOUSE AND WAITED...

WHY, TONY! HOW CLEVER!
YOU'RE GOING TO BUILD ALL
THE OLD TRASH INSTEAD OF
HAVING TO CARRY IT
OUTSIDE...

AM DONE OFF IT,
BABY! YOU KNOW
THAT'S NOT WHAT
I'M DOIN'...



FANNY LOOKED AT ME REAL GOLD LIKE AND WHISPERED
SARCASTICALLY...

OF COURSE YOU'RE DIGGIN' FOR
TREASURE... A HUNDRED
THOUSAND DOLLAR
TREASURE!

WRONG AGAIN!
I'M DIGGIN'
A GRAVE! YOUR GRAVE!

FANNY COULD SEE BY MY FACE I WAS LEVELIN'. IT WAS
LIKE SHE'D NEVER EXPECTED THIS TURN OF EVENTS. SHE
LET OUT A LITTLE SQUEAL AND STARTED TO RUN. I
SHOULD HAVE PICKED HARD...



THE PICK MOONED HER DEEP IN HER BACK AND SHE HIT THE CELLAR FLOOR LIKE AN OLD ROG THEN I WENT TO WORK ON THAT FACE ... THAT AWFUL LILY FACE. IT WAS JUST SOMETHIN' I HAD TO DO 'CAUSE I WAS GETTIN' EVEN FOR HAVIN' DESRAYED MYSELF BY HAVIN' LOVE TO IT ALL THOSE MONTHS...

UH...UHHH...UHHHH



I WAS SOO TIRED FROM WHAT I'D DONE SO I HIT THE HAY EARLY THAT NIGHT AND SLEPT UNTIL I HEARD A RUMBLE ON THE FRONT PORCH. IT WAS THE RAGMAN...

LOOK, PAL. MY WIFE TOOK OFF ON A LONG TRIP. SHE WON'T BE BACK FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS. COME BACK THEN, HUH?

CAN'T YOU SELL ME SOME RADS?



I WAS READY TO SLAM THE DOOR IN HIS FACE BUT, JUST TO GET RID OF THE PEST, I CHARGED DOWN SOME OLD CLOTHES FROM A CLOSET. HE DIDN'T SEEM HAPPY WITH THEM...

THESE AREN'T VERY NICE RADS, MR. BARRETT. I CAN'T PAY YOU MUCH FOR THEM...



AFTER I FINISHED I DUMPED HER BLOODY BODY INTO THE DRAVE AND COVERED THE WHOLE THING OVER WITH DIRT.

WELL, BABY I GUESS YOU KNOW WHO GOT THE LAST LAUGH NOW.



I SPENT DAYS COMIN' THROUGH THE REST OF THE HOUSE. I EVEN TORE UP THE KITCHEN, SMASHED GRAN'PA'S OLD WHEEL CHAIR. IT WAS GETTIN' ME DOWN.

IT'S GOT TO BE HERE... SOMEWHERE! IT'S NOT SOI I CAN'T RATE I CAN'T.



AND TO TOP IT ALL OFF, THAT CRUMBY CREEP KEPT COMIN' BACK. TILL THIS MORNIN', I FLIPPED MY LID...

I'VE BEEN OVER THIS DUMP FROM ATTIC TO CELLAR! I GAVE YOU EVERY RAD I COULD FIND! I GOT NO MORE RADS! NOW, FOR GOD'S SAKE, LEAVE ME ALONE!

MRS. BARRETT WOULD HAVE RADS FOR ME



NOW I'M A GUY WITH A STRONG CONSCIENCE, SO WHAT WITH THE RAGMAN PESTERN' ME AND FANNY LYIN' DEAD IN THE CELLAR, I COULDN'T SLEEP TONIGHT. AROUND MID-NIGHT OR SO, I HEARD A NOISE IN THE HOUSE. I GOT A BUN OUT OF MY SUITCASE AND WENT DOWNSTAIRS FOR A LOOK...



THE ~~WATER~~ WAS COMIN' FROM THE
COLLAR I WENT DOWN. IT WAS HIM
ALONE IN MY HOUSE. ROSIN'
AROUND.

I TOLD YOU I
DID NO MORE
RAGS! NOW
BUT YOU DO!
NICE RAGS!
THE CLOTHES-
DID HER!



He was pointin' to Fannister grave
he knew I'd kill 'em and I
knew then I'd have to kill
him. I pulled the trigger...
once... twice... he didn't
even move...

I COULDN'T MISS
AT SUCH CLOSE
RANGE! I HIT
YOU TWICE...
I CAN SEE THE
HOLE IN...

I LOVED HER
MR. BARRETT?
I WANTED HER
TO BE HAPPY
I DIDN'T
KNOW ANYTHING



I SHOT THE GUN AT HIM. I DROVE
MORE SHOTS, BUT HE JUST STOOD
THERE.

SHE NEEDED MORE THAN I COULD
GIVE HER...SOMEONE YOUNG...
SOMEONE LIKE YOU! THAT'S
WHY I TOLD YOU ABOUT
HER MONEY! I WANTED / **DIE!**
HER TO BE HAPPY! / **I SHOT**
YOU SIX /



I KEPT STRAININ' STURVOL AT THE SIX HOMES BURNED
INTO HIS CHEST. THEN I SNATCHED UP THE PICK I
SWUNG IT, CATCHIN' HIM BELOW THE SHOULDER, SWINGIN'
IT INTO HIS BACK.

YOU'RE NOT HUMAN! YOU'RE
NOT! THERE'S NO BLOOD!
YOU'RE NOT EVEN FLESH
AND BONE!"



HE LEAPED AT ME, WRAPPING HIS HANDS AROUND MY THROAT... FUNNY KIND OF HANDS, SOFT AND STRINNY-LIKE. HE KEPT CHOKIN' ME... CUTTIN' OFF MY AIR; I TOPED AT HIS BODY, TRYIN' T WAKE HIM, LOSE HIS HOLD, AND MY HANDS CAME AWAY WITH CHUNKS OF SOFT FOIL-SMELLIN' FISH.

RAGS! YOU'RE NOTHING BUT SHOKE, RAGS!



THAT'S WHY I SENT
YOU TO HER! SHE
NEEDS MORE THAN
ME! I LOVED HER...

~~BUT I KNEW SHE COULD
NEVER LOVE A RAGMAN!~~



EVERTHIN'S COMIN' RED AND BLACK BOMB. I HEAR A FUNKY KIND OF
MUSIC IN MY HEAD AND LAUGHIN... I HEAR PARENT LAUGHIN...

SHE'S DIBBIN THAT RAD-TIME MUSIC,
NO DOUBT, TON' WELL, DON'T FEEL MAD
NEST THAT YOURE DEAD. YOU WON'T
HAVE TO OIBIT! THEYLL DO YOU...
A BRAVE, THAT IM WELL, RIDDLES...NEST
TIME YOUE NEAR THE OLD EXPRESSION...
"CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN" - REMEMBER
THE RAHMAN! OLD CLOTHES DIDN'T.
IN HIS CASE, WELL, I'VE GOT TO BE
SHOVELING OFF! HOPE YOU ENJOYED.

